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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY J.L. DATE 9/30/82
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1674
E.O. 12065: RDS-1,2 6/18/01 (EAGLETON, WILLIAM E.) OR-M
TAGS: UNSC, MOPS, IS, IZ
SUBJ: IRAQI REACTION TO PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE
1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. IRAQI MEDIA REMAIN RESTRAINED IN THEIR TREATMENT OF THE UNSC DELIBERATIONS ON THE ISRAELI RAID. CRITICISM OF THE U.S. HAS MORE OFTEN BEEN CARRIED FROM SOURCES OUTSIDE IRAQ THAN IN IRAQI MATERIAL. PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO HAVE CAUSED CONSIDERABLE DISMAY HERE IN OFFICIAL QUARTERS. AND,

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FROM WHAT WE ARE ABLE TO JUDGE, AMONG THE PUBLIC.
3. THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT TOOK THE UNUSUAL STEP OF ISSUING AN OFFICIAL REACTION (CARRIED BY FBIS REPORTS) TO THE PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE. THE STATEMENT BEGAN: "THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT NOTED THE PRESS STATEMENTS BY U.S. PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN TUESDAY IN WHICH HE TRIED TO JUSTIFY THE ZIONIST FLAGRANT AND VICIOUS AGGRESSIONS ON IRAQ JUNE 7". THE STATEMENT CALLED THE PRESS CONFERENCE "FAR FROM BEING OBJECTIVE". THE STATEMENT ALSO COMPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN, IN HIS EARLIER MEETING WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS, HAD "REPEATED THE LIES OF ZIONIST PREMIER BEGIN, THAT IRAQI OFFICIALS HAD STATED... THAT THE REACTOR WAS NOT BUILT AGAINST IRAN BUT AGAINST THE ZIONIST ENTITY".
4. [redacted] B-1

5. FROM ITS OBSERVED REACTION-WE CONCLUDE THAT THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT THEY SEE AS A PRO-ISRAELI TILT OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT AND WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE HIS MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE IRAQI POSITION. GIVEN THE DEPTH OF THEIR FEELING, THEIR STATEMENT IS FAIRLY MODERATE. THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING IN THEIR REACTION YET TO INDICATE WHAT THEY REQUIRE FROM THE UNSC MEETING. THIS PERMITS THE IRAQI LEADERSHIP EITHER TO WORK TOWARD A CONSENSUS RESOLUTION OR INSIST ON SANCTIONS THAT WOULD RESULT IN A U.S. VETO.
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